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ABSTRACT

Part of the Harvard Family Research Project's ongoing series of case studies that examine state-level policy and programs for families, this booklet reviews initiatives undertaken by the states of Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, and Missouri to support and educate families with young children. Each of the booklet's five sections focuses on a particular state, and includes a history of the state initiative, a description of its scope, and thoughtful reflections by the state-level director about lessons learned and expectations for the future. (RH)

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PIONEERING STATES

Innovative Family Support and Education Programs

Connecticut
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Preface

Hardly a week goes by in which the media, a politician, or a research organization does not sound the theme of the changing American family. Some of the more dramatic statistics they employ include the estimate that by 1995 more than three-quarters of all school-age children and two-thirds of all preschoolers will have mothers in the work force; and that fifty-nine percent of all children born in 1983 will live with only one parent before reaching the age of eighteen.

In the midst of these changes in family structure, composition and work patterns, two points demand the attention of policy makers dedicated to bettering the future of our children. The first is a recognition, increasingly reinforced by research, that the family serves as the cornerstone of human development, and that factors outside the family affect its capacity to nurture and rear its children. The second is the American ideological commitment to the primacy of the family. Although changing family patterns can make it harder to work with stressed families, the implication, both of research and of enduring American values, is that we should not bypass families when we design approaches to helping our children. Rather, we should work to strengthen and reinforce families.

One such approach is family support and education. Programs under this rubric vary widely, but they also share an ideology and certain common characteristics: 1) based on evidence that demonstrates the influence of the family environment on children's behavior and cognitive development, they take an ecological approach to human development, working with parents or families rather than exclusively with children; 2) they provide opportunities for parents to learn about children's social, psychological, and cognitive development; 3) they provide support to families, both formal and informal; 4) rather than assuming family deficits, they emphasize family strengths; and, 5) they emphasize prevention and family maintenance rather than remediation.

These programs answer a now paramount question of public policy: What can government and communities do to enhance families' capacities to help themselves and each other?

Since 1983, the Harvard Family Research Project has collected, analyzed and disseminated information about family support and education programs, serving as a resource for practitioners, evaluators, and policy

makers. HFRP has conducted a national survey of family support and education programs and is now preparing publications outlining program evaluation strategies and a national resource guide to school-based programs. HFRP also prepared and edited Evaluating Family Programs, (NY: Aldine, 1988)

This booklet is part of the Harvard Family Research Project's ongoing series of case studies that examine state-level policy and programs for families. The past few years have seen a burgeoning interest on the part of state governments in family support and education as a means to prevent costly later problems. Several state governments have undertaken statewide efforts to support and educate families with young children. The case study project is currently examining policy initiatives in a group of these pioneering states: Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, and Missouri. The case studies address issues and choices in the formulation and implementation of policy, including: targeted versus universal programming; a focus on desired outcomes for children or on two-generational outcomes; creation of new organizational units or transformation of an existing unit; use of a state-directed model versus a local design and model development; choice and creativity regarding sources of funding; single agency versus inter-agency sponsorship; coordination with other existing community-based agencies serving families with young children; beginning with pilot or statewide programs; and issues in building the capacity necessary for statewide program implementation.

This document gives an overview of the five state-level initiatives that are currently part of the Harvard Family Research Project study. Each section includes a history of the state initiative, a description of its scope, and thoughtful reflections by the state-level director about the lessons he or she has learned and about what lies ahead. We hope that these lessons from the pioneers, along with the larger case studies from which they are drawn, prove useful to those who are currently contemplating or undertaking preventive policy initiatives for families in their state.

Heather Weiss, Director
Harvard Family Research Project
1988

Connecticut

The Department of Children and Youth Services (DCYS) is the first, and only, state comprehensive childrens' services agency to provide parent education services to a non-targeted population. In January 1987, with a budget of only $300,000, the Division of Family Support and Community Living at DCYS initiated ten pilot Parent Education Support Centers (PESCs). The PESC concept is drawn from a model of child development which stresses the importance of bonding between children and their primary environments – family, school, peers and community. Although all parents of children 17 years-of-age and younger are eligible to participate, priority is given to adolescents, first-time, low-income, and minority parents. Because of its broad eligibility standards, PESC is considered more prevention oriented than programs in other states that target services to "at-risk" parents.

Key Events

1984

J. David Hawkins and Joseph G. Weis' Social Development Model of Positive Youth Development is accepted by DCYS.

1985

The DCYS Division of Planning and Community Development begins planning initiative for children and families which includes funding for comprehensive parent centers.

Legislature passes FY 1986 budget which includes permanent funding for a DCYS Prevention Coordinator.

1986

Legislature passes FY 1987 budget which includes six-month funding to develop a network of Parent Education and Support Centers (PESC).

A Request for Proposal is issued by DCYS, announcing the availability of $150,000 for 10 centers to be funded 1/1/87 through 6/30/87.

1987

Ten centers, funded at $15,000 each for six months, begin operation. Appropriation for PESCs is annualized to $300,000 plus a cost of living increase ($31,200 per program per year) for fiscal year 1987-88.

The University of Southern Maine's Center for Research and Advanced Study is chosen to evaluate the PESCs. USM consultants begin evaluation of two of the 10 centers.

1988

The Connecticut Commission on Children (CCC) plans a study of Connecticut's early childhood development programs including parenting education/family support.

Evaluation of PESCs expands to six sites. Legislature approves $175,000 in new funds: $75,000 to implement an urban center program in Bridgeport and $10,000 in new funds for each of the 10 existing centers. The FY 1988-89 allocation to each of the original centers is $42,697.

Scope of Activities

Sponsors

The Department of Children and Youth Services (DCYS) funded ten community-based agencies to set up programs throughout the state through an RFP process. Sponsors include local community service agencies, mental health services, Catholic Charities, and a youth and family services agency.

Goals

To support families and strengthen family processes. The effort is designed to promote positive child and adolescent development; increase community-based prevention resources to assist parents; increase community linkages to link parents to local resources; and to increase technical assistance and training to schools and other agencies working with parents.

Funding

Initial funding for FY 1987 was $300,000 for 10 centers. The PESC allocation expanded to $475,000 for FY 1989 which includes a $75,000 grant to open an expanded urban center model.

Participants

Centers must serve all parents of children 0-17 with priority given to those groups in the community that are under-served. Selection for programs is "non evaluative and not based on any negative criteria." The under-served include teen and single parents, low-income parents, two-worker families, and parents with limited proficiency in English.

Staff	Qualifications for staff members are determined by local program directors.
Services	Each center must provide parent education and parent training services; parent support services (groups, drop-in programs, parent-child activities); information and coordination services and technical assistance, consultation and training services (for other community agencies).
Role of Parents	To participate in the program and its planning, governance, and operation.
Evaluation	Consultants from the University of Southern Maine are conducting a systematic formative evaluation in two centers. Monitoring of program implementation in all centers is managed by the Division of Family Support and Community Living at DCYS.

Reflections on the Past and Future

Robert Keating, State Director

A key lesson we learned is about the local control issue. While we provided a broad program outline, we left the fine tuning--the programmatic fashioning--to each of the ten sites so that their programs would match the idiosyncratic conditions of their local population. That proved to be a very important ingredient for successful implementation. A related and important issue is that of developing a constituency. These programs were planned and developed without advance constituency building. There wasn't a broad movement behind it--it was in some ways an idea without a context. But our efforts to provide technical assistance and to facilitate regular meetings with programs have pulled these projects together as leaders. They are not the locus of constituency building in their respective geographical areas.

As the PESCs become more accepted and permanent, they will be facing pressures to add specific kinds of programs and services; pressures that will arise out of such efforts as welfare reform, and expansions in childcare resources, for example. A balanced and controlled process of expansion or modification will be essential if we are to maintain the integrity of the core programs. There is another important issue: our programs will begin to appropriately assume an advocacy role of their own.

For example, they are looking for private sources of support. As they become more successful advocates, the state and local partnership may have to be reevaluated and refined to allow for mutual growth and development and clearer divisions of labor between government sectors.

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Kentucky

In March 1986, the Kentucky General Assembly passed HB 662, Parent and Child Education (PACE), creating a $1.2 million pilot program in 12 school districts. In response to the unusually high number of adults who do not complete high school, and concerned with promoting economic development, PACE attempts to address undereducation and negative attitudes toward education. Kentucky is unique in developing parent education and family support programs within the context of an adult literacy program in the public schools. In its two years of operation, PACE has served approximately 700 parents and children at a cost of approximately $800 each. Seventy-percent of the adults have either received a GED or added two years to their grade equivalency, and children have measurably raised their developmental level. PACE is a winner of the 1988 Ford Foundation and Harvard University Kennedy School of Government Award for Innovations in State and Local Government.

Key Events

1985

Sharon Darling and Jeanne Heberle at the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) brainstorm new program combining models that address adult literacy and parent education with existing and proven models for preschool education.

Darling approaches Roger Noe (D.), Chairman of the Kentucky House Education Committee with the concept of a programmatic intervention to attack the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy.

Noe requests KDE to develop educational program based on existing and proven models of intervention that directs services to mothers and children simultaneously.

Darling and Heberle develop program format in four hours, using the High/Scope preschool model and existing GED tutoring and parent/education and support models.

1986

Noe submits PACE as HB 622 to Kentucky General Assembly. PACE passes with $300,000 for first year appropriations to open six centers.

1987	Kentucky General Assembly appropriates $900,000 for expansion. Two sites are closed because of low participation; eight new sites are selected. Total number of sites operating during FY 1988 is 12 with 18 classrooms.
1988	General Assembly rejects proposal for major expansion of PACE, but votes to fund the existing program at $1.8 million. PACE is cited as one of ten outstanding programs in the U.S. by Innovations in State and Local Government Awards Program, co-sponsored by the Ford Foundation and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Scope of Activities

Sponsors	The Division of Adult and Community Education of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) administers the twelve school-based centers.
Goals	PACE was founded in response to the unusually high number of adults who have failed to complete high school, and to the resulting shortage of skilled labor. It aims to break the intergenerational cycle of undereducation by uniting parents and children in a positive educational experience.
Funding	PACE is funded exclusively by the state of Kentucky which appropriated $300,000 for FY 1987 to begin services in six sites, and then $900,000 for FY 1988 for the operation of programs in 12 districts with 18 classrooms. The General Assembly rejected a bill in 1988 to expand PACE, but accepted a proposal to level-fund the program at $1.8 million.
Participants	Eligibility for participation is restricted to parents who do not have a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate with 3 and 4-year old children. School districts are eligible to apply for a PACE grant if the percentage of adults in their district without a high school diploma exceeds 50%. In the two years of operation, PACE has served approximately 700 parents and children.
Staff	Each site has one adult educator, one teaching assistant and one preschool teacher; teachers and teaching assistants are employees of the school system and receive compensation equal to district employees.

Services

Preschool program for 3- and 4-year-olds based on the High/Scope Educational Foundation developmental model; joint parent/child activities with emphasis on how children learn; GED tutoring for parents; support group for parents on issues related to self-esteem and competence.

Role of Parents

Parents receive GED preparation, formal and informal supports for career development and parenting.

Evaluation

PACE is in the process of developing a formal evaluation tool; in the meantime, they have collected data on participation rates and GED completion. The preliminary evaluation reveals that 48.9 % of participating parents passed the GED exam in the first year, as contrasted with 15% from a non-participating control group. In 1987-1988, PACE maintained a 74% participant retention rate.

Reflections on the Past and Future

Jeanne Heberle, PACE Director

It is certainly useful to ask what we have learned in the past two years. We now know that local administration is a sound idea. Districts are extremely resourceful in administering the programs. Some problems arise out of legislative and administrative requirements: the law restricts eligibility to those without high school credentials and with a three- or four-year-old child, and there are no funds allocated for administration or research and evaluation. Since some of our parents acquire their high school equivalency certificate quickly, and then are no longer eligible to participate in PACE, we might want the legislation to be changed to read: anyone entering without high school credentials may remain until completion of the academic year. We have also learned that recruitment takes a major part of staff time. Limiting the child's age to 3 and 4 reduces the pool of eligible clients and child care for younger children is not available. We are considering a short initial home-based program that will give the client confidence to move gradually into the school program and the addition of money for child care. Another very important lesson has been the critical role of staff-training and the necessity for a team approach between the adult and early childhood educators. They must be trained simultaneously in the principles of early childhood and adult and parent education in order to plan and work as a team.

We are developing an objective, formative evaluation system in addition to documenting our clients' success. Another major issue will be dealing with PACE's success, and the growing local and national interest. In spite of the considerable enthusiasm that has been generated for statewide coverage, we will probably recommend a gradual expansion over the next two to three years.

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Maryland

The Maryland Department of Human Resources is in the forefront among state human services agencies in establishing Family Support Centers in seven sites. In 1985 the Department of Human Resources allocated $300,000 to start four community-based drop-in centers to provide support to adolescent parents and their families. State funding was augmented by a $100,000 grant from the Goldseker and Straus foundations. With continuing public and private sources of support, an independent entity, Friends of the Family, was created to administer the centers. By FY 1989, with a total budget of over $2 million, the Family Support Centers will expand to eleven centers, providing services to more than 3,000 individuals.

Key Events

1984	Governor holds retreat to discuss children's issues. Committee on Children and Youth created.
	Frank Farrow, Director of Social Services Administration at Department of Human Resources (DHR), convenes working group to brainstorm a family support initiative.
	Governor Hughes hears presentation on family support proposal and indicates his support.
1985	Budget hearings held. Family Support Centers on Governor's budget are submitted to the General Assembly.
	Budget Committee awards $297,000 to FSCs. Straus and Goldseker Foundations commit $50,000 each.
	Governor's Task Force on Teen Pregnancy releases report. Funding for FSCs begins. Selection of four sites from 50 proposals. Richard Dowling, Executive Director of the Maryland Catholic Conference, supports FSC proposal.
1986	Legislature votes $600,000 in funding for FSCs; four additional sites are selected for a total of eight.
1987	Ford Foundation announces grant of $128,000; Knott Foundation announces grant of $27,000 and Public Welfare Foundation provides $110,000.

1988	Goldseker increases its commitment to $75,000 per year and the legislature increases to over $1 million. Two sites are closed; a new one, the first in a public school setting, is selected, and will open in the fall. Annie Casey Foundation awards grant of $1.5 million in five years to Maryland for the Family Support Centers.

Scope of Activities

Sponsors	A partnership between the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Straus and Goldseker foundations has formed Friends of the Family as an independent entity to administer the Family Support Centers. The sponsors went through a proposal-submission process to fund four community agencies (a church, an economic opportunity committee, a local development corporation, and a Catholic Charities group).
Goals	To develop community-based support services that (1) prevent unwanted pregnancies among adolescents, (2) assist adolescent parents to become better parents, (3) assure the healthy growth and development of children of adolescent parents, (4) help adolescent parents remain in the mainstream by completing school and preparing for employment.
Funding	Initial funding of $75,000 for planning pilots came from a federal NCCAN grant. For first-year (FY 1986) operations, DHR provided $300,000, and Straus and Goldseker jointly provided $100,000. Additional grants from the Ford, Knott, Agell and Baker, and Public Welfare Foundations have been awarded for FY 1989 to Friends of the Family or local programs.
Participants	Teen parents or mates and relatives of teen parents.
Staff	Backgrounds of staff vary by program.
Services	A core set of services including services to enhance parenting skills; health care and family planning; diagnostic and assessment services for parent and child; temporary child care; peer support activities; educational opportunities including GED; and job preparation and skill development to prepare for employment.

Role of Parents

Parents participate in the program to strengthen their parenting skills, their own development, and that of their child. In-take interviews are set up to review family strengths, and "positive elements are examined and highlighted."

Evaluation

Ongoing formative evaluation and client-monitoring to include descriptive data on client status; program utilization data; profiles of participants; intervention plans; and program, participant, and community satisfaction ratings. Initial evaluation was begun by the Regional Center for Infants and Young Children; ongoing formative and summative evaluations are in process.

Reflections on the Past and Future

Rosalie Streett, State Director

If there is one key lesson, it is the value of maintaining the principles of family support -- partnership in decision-making and flexibility -- throughout the process. These principles were played out in the development of the program and are still operating at all levels. Being flexible allowed us to incorporate ideas from all our stakeholders. We never say "We have planned it all," primarily because as our families change, the program changes too. So, building in flexibility is what we did right.

Related to this is a second lesson: the importance of establishing a separate entity, Friends of the Family, to administer the programs. If we had chosen to go through the state, it would have been a mistake. Friends of the Family allowed us to be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of our families as well as to nourish the partnership between the public and private sectors. I can't tell you that this administrative solution would be right for Minnesota or Michigan, but it is right for us.

Third, do not do this without building in a strong technical assistance component. Not building in that support would have been a TERRIBLE ERROR. Centers, like families, need to be part of a larger network. That is how relationships -- and support for the program -- are built. And, this is the piece that is politically difficult; it is easy to get voters or legislators to buy into an idea, but to get them to accept that extra financial commitment for technical assistance and training is critical.

An issue we face routinely is the difficulty of finding the right people to work in our centers. We need people who understand the philosophy of family support, feel comfortable in this different way of relating to people, and have adequate formal training in infant development. The colleges and universities must come to recognize that we are creating a new job market.

I am glad that we built an evaluation into our program, but we need to give it more attention. We have an obligation to the future generation to provide information on outcomes, and we owe it to ourselves as well. Our lives are too short to waste on interventions that don't work.

Finally, in retrospect, perhaps we should have insisted on a universal access program. The jury is still out on that.... We took advantage of an opportunity and we couldn't have done it differently, but once you get into targeted programs for at-risk families, can you get out of it? Can you shift to a broader eligibility standard?

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Minnesota

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) experienced a 10 year pilot stage prior to legislation passing in 1984 that allowed for statewide implementation. A number of factors have contributed to the phenomenal expansion from 34 pilot projects to 310 programs by 1988. These include: the homogeneity of Minnesota's population and their receptivity to educational innovation, the early and enduring commitment of an influential legislator, the early administrative placement of the initiative, the strategic use of pilot sites, the use of formative program evaluations, the appeal of a non-deficit model of services, the adoption of an easy to administer funding mechanism, and the existence of a qualified labor pool.

Efforts by the state ECFE specialist to develop training initiatives, provide technical assistance in program development, information dissemination, and state-level networking have all helped to build the capacity necessary for ECFE to expand so rapidly.

Key Events

1971	Council on Quality Education (CQE) created by Legislature to fund innovative, cost-effective programs in local districts.
1973	DFL assumes majority in Senate; Hughes becomes Chairman of Education Committee and introduces first ECFE bill; laid over until 1974.
1974	ECFE bill introduced in Senate by Hughes; basically identical to 1973 bill. Compromise to establish ECFE advisory task force and draft CQE to pilot at least six programs with $230,000.
1975	Number of pilot programs increases to at least 10 for 1975-76 and 1976-77 with $500,000 appropriated for each year.
1977	Legislature approves increase to 22 sites at $854,000 per year and directs CQE to study policy issues and report back in 1979.
1979	CQE recommendation to begin gradual expansion to 40 sites negotiated to 36 in Legislature and recommendation to start development of a formula to which proven programs would shift from grants is tabled. Grant category for serving economically disadvantaged parents is established. Appropriations are $1,650,000 for FY 1980 and $1,767,000 for FY 1981.

1980	Thirty-six ECFE pilot programs operate in 29 districts.
1981	CQE staff present 1979 policy study with minor revisions to legislative offices. Preoccupation with growing revenue crisis limits discussion. Appropriations are $1,500,000 for FY 1982 and $1,275,000 for FY 1983.
1982	Passage of provision in Senate aids bill that would begin pilot conversion of experienced programs to variation of foundation aid formula; provision excised in Finance Committee. State budget cuts resulting in the FY 1983 ECFE appropriation being reduced to $1,157,577.
1983	Hughes becomes President of Minnesota Senate. Pilot sites provided with CQE grant and $.25 per capita in aid. All districts with a Community Education program receive aid at $.25 per capita and are encouraged, but not required, to use it for ECFE. Legislation shifts responsibility for ECFE to Community Education in 1984-85 with $.50 per capita aid.
1984	Hughes sponsors legislation that replaces the $.50 per capita aid for 1985-86 with an ECFE aid and levy formula. Legislation specifies program characteristics, accounting procedures, and requires teacher licensure for staff.
1985	Local districts allowed to levy up to .4 mill in October of 1984 for use in FY 1986; 253 districts levy in October. Levy increased to .5 mill for use in FY 1987. Expectant parents added as a group that may be served and substantial parent involvement is defined. Approximately 70 districts have ECFE programs in operation; many more start planning and outreach.
1986	First year of implementation under formula funding. Total state appropriation increases to $5,245,100, with total local levy generating $7,459,845. 253 out of 435 school districts offer ECFE services.
1987	Total state appropriation increases to $6,028,600 with local levy generating $9,771,400. Approximately 300 local districts offer ECFE.
1988	Approximately 380 out of 435 school districts are designated Community Education districts and are eligible to levy for ECFE. 310 districts currently offer ECFE services.

Scope of Activities

Sponsors

Initially, the Council on Quality Education (CQE), as part of the State Department of Education (SDE) awarded competitive grants to local school districts. As of 1984, responsibility was assumed by Community and Adult Education with a statewide funding formula.

Goals

The major goal is to strengthen families by supporting parents in their efforts in raising children, offering child development information and alternative parenting techniques, fostering effective communication between parents and their children, supplementing the discovery and learning experiences of children, and promoting positive parental attitudes throughout their children's school years.

Funding

Amount in FY 1988: Approximately $7.54 million in state aid and $10.7 million in property tax revenue. Local districts may also charge participants reasonable fees, but must waive fees for those unable to pay. Funding may also be received from other sources including state vocational-technical aid, federal grants, or foundation funds.

Participants

All children in the period of life from birth to kindergarten are eligible, the parents of such children, and expectant parents. Special efforts are made to recruit low-income families and those experiencing stress.

Role of Parents

Substantive parental involvement is required by statute. Parents are viewed as the primary recipients of the program. They are the majority of members of a required local advisory council.

Services

Local services and activities may vary, but the most common form of programming is a weekly class for children held simultaneously with a parent class. Services may also include home visits for outreach and education/support, special events, access to toys and books, newsletters, sibling care, and special services for particular populations (e.g., Southeast Asian immigrants, single parents, teen parents).

Staff

Most programs employ a full or part-time coordinator and full or part-time parent educators and early childhood teachers. All teachers working with parents and children in ECFE programs must be appropriately licensed as teachers. Two new licensure areas have recently been approved by the Board of Teaching. At the end of a five-year transition period (1989), all teaching staff must be appropriately licensed as parent educators, or in an area of early childhood or nursery school teaching.

Evaluation

During the pilot phase, the program had several systematic formative evaluations and attempts at summative ones. Local programs typically measure participant satisfaction and are required to submit annual reports of participation rates by type of activity to the SDE.

Reflections on the Past and Future

Lois Engstrom,
State ECFE Specialist

In retrospect, I am really glad there was a pilot stage. What was learned has really helped with implementation statewide. I do wish we would have had more administrative staff and financial resources at the state level --particularly as the initiative expanded more rapidly than anyone expected. The other lesson is the importance of having established a regional inservice network as a way to share information statewide. It has become an effective way to get input from ECFE coordinators regarding policy development; plus it gives the local staff ownership.

I see a number of issues emerging that will need to be addressed in the next few years. Getting the initial funding base for local programs was one thing, but we need additional funding and a mechanism for allocation that will promote efficient and effective use of these resources, especially when program development is uneven across the state. Some areas of the state have continuing difficulty in recruiting qualified staff. It may be due to the part-time nature of the positions, as well as the sparsely populated nature of some districts. It will continue to be a challenge for us. Finally, we are still working to figure out a way to do evaluation and research with limited resources. I find that even with a popular program such as ECFE, there are those who continue to ask, "How do you know this is really making a difference?" Also, in order to do further program development, we really need to know what particular strategies work best with which populations.

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Missouri

As the only state in America with a statutory mandate to provide parent education and family support services in every school district, Missouri is in the vanguard with its policy initiative for families. Parents as Teachers (PAT), a program designed to enhance child development and scholastic performance by reaching out to families before a child is born, was established as a pilot program in four school districts in 1981, with funding from the Danforth Foundation, in addition to federal and local support. It became mandatory for each of Missouri's 543 school districts under the Early Childhood Development Act (ECDA). ECDA passed through the Missouri General Assembly as SB 658 in 1984, and a $2.7 million budget was appropriated in 1985. In FY 1988, with a budget of over $11 million, PAT served approximately 53,000 families.

Key Events

1980

Governor Kit Bond is reelected and resumes lobbying activity on behalf of parent education.

1981

Second Conference for Decision Makers held to present latest research findings and provide state direction in early childhood/parent education. Conference participants decide to launch New Parents as Teachers (NPAT) based on Burton White's model. NPAT becomes collaborative effort of the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education and the Danforth Foundation.

Four school districts selected as pilot sites on the basis of competitive proposals. Department of Education commits $130,000 from state's Chapter II ECIA funds. Commissioner Mallory selects Mildred Winter to administer the pilot.

1982

An advisory committee, Committee on Parents as Teachers (CPAT) is created as a political and fundraising tool, and includes a broad cross-section of advocates, medical, educational, and political leaders across the state. Senate Budget Committee rejects PAT bill for third time.

1984

Early Childhood Development Act (SB 658) authorizes parent education and screening birth through age four. Legislation mandates provision of services in all 543 school districts.

1985	Legislature appropriates $2.7 million. Evaluation Report of NPAT released by Research and Training Associates of Overland Park, KS. Winter sets up statewide training institutes. First year of statewide implementation of developmental screening for ages one and two, and parent education birth to three under SB 658. Districts are reimbursed for 10% of eligible population.
1986	Second wave PAT evaluation study involving 37 school districts is begun. Districts reimbursed for 20% of eligible population.
1987	PAT National Advisory Board convenes; National Training Center established. Districts reimbursed for 30% of eligible population. Follow-up study of NPAT participants entering kindergarten is initiated. PAT selected by Harvard's Kennedy School as one of ten outstanding innovations in government.
1988	Legislation appropriates $11.4 million for PAT.

Scope of Activities

Sponsors	Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, local school districts, and the Ford and Danforth Foundations.
Goals	In line with the philosophy that parents are the child's primary teachers, the program provides information and educational guidance to enhance the child's physical, social, and intellectual development, and attempts to reduce stress and enhance the pleasures of parenting, as well as to reduce the need for remediation and special education services.
Funding	The pilot was funded by local and federal dollars from Chapter II, ECIA funds. State funding began in FY 1985, and has increased to $11.4 million for FY 1988. State reimburses local districts for 30% of eligible families. School district and in-kind funds are provided at local discretion. Private funding since 1981 from the Danforth, Ford, and other foundations has amounted to more than $500,000.
Participants	Parents with children 0-3 are eligible for services. Although it is a universal program, special efforts are made to enroll parents of newborns and at-risk families.

Staff

During the pilot phase (1981-1984) each program had two full-time equivalent parent educators and a part-time secretary. Criteria for selection of parent educators and program directors is determined by local school districts. However, parent educators must complete a required program of pre-service and in-service training.

Services

The home visit, scheduled at 4-6 week intervals, is the heart of the program. Group meetings are offered monthly. These services are supplemented by periodic screening for physical, cognitive, and language development through age three.

Role of Parents

Parents are the primary recipients of services; some participate in local advisory boards and district parent councils.

Evaluation

A systematic summative evaluation was a central part of the pilot design. Research and Training Associates compared seventy-five participating families with a control group and found positive child outcomes: better intellectual, language and social development; and positive parent outcomes: increased knowledge of child development, positive feelings about PAT and about the school district. In a "second wave" evaluation being conducted in 1989 a total sample of 2,500 families in 37 districts will be followed through the child's third birthday.

Reflections on the Past and Future

Mildred Winter, State Director

The coalition-building and marketing which resulted in the enabling legislation and initial funding for the Parents as Teachers Program are never ending. Decision makers at both the state and local levels need to be kept informed and involved to ensure their advocacy and support. A new initiative must maintain high public visibility and make clear its benefits to the many stakeholders. Also, we have found that offering PAT through the public school system communicates to families that their participation will enhance their child's future school success. And, schools, then, are obliged to maintain contact and support after the child turns three; they must prepare their staff to welcome parents into the school as partners. Finally, we have found that while maintaining a clear educational focus, Parents as Teachers is kept affordable by linking families with other available resources as needed. Keeping costs low sends an important message to other state agencies and community organizations that effective, low-cost prevention programs are feasible.

First, because there is a great need to assess the program's impact on child and family functioning, we have designed a series of new research projects: the first is a longitudinal study of the school experiences of children and parents involved in the original evaluation; the second is a study looking at some 2500 families now enrolled in PAT in 37 diverse school districts. In addition, qualitative studies will speak to the question of program adaptation for different kinds of families, including teen parents and families in poverty, in both urban and rural areas. Second, we want to add new dimensions to the curriculum, training and service delivery to meet the challenge of serving families of all types and configurations, while maintaining the integrity of the model. Third, we have developed a Parents as Teachers model for the Child Care Center. In the coming year, we intend to monitor, refine, and evaluate this model which is now operating in eight distinctly different child care settings, including a United Way program, a corporate funded center, a hospital-based program and community college center. Finally, we anticipate expanding our efforts to respond to the multitude of requests for information and consultation on shaping public policy for parent-child early education.

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